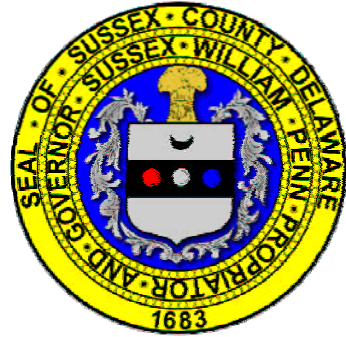


News Release



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Sussex County commits more than \$1.5 million for regional sewer studies, groundwater ordinance

GEORGETOWN, Del. – Sussex County Council is taking a proactive approach to future development, approving separate measures to properly plan for new sewer users as well as ensure the protection of the area's groundwater supplies.

County Council, at its Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2006, meeting voted unanimously to award a \$1.5 million consulting contract to Stearns & Wheeler environmental engineers of Bowie, Md., to begin planning now for the expansion of two sewer service areas and the possible creation of another.

The consultant will put together separate planning studies to determine the feasibility of providing expanded sewer service to the town center areas surrounding Dagsboro-Frankford, as well as Blades. A third study would look at the concept of creating a regional sewer system for towns along the U.S. 13 corridor in western Sussex County.

Those studies will map potential sewer service areas for future housing and commercial development, and give county engineers an idea of how best to serve them with collection lines and treatment facilities. The studies should be completed within 18 months.

Officials said the planning studies are needed now so Sussex County's sewer infrastructure can accommodate future growth, and do so with a collection and treatment method that is more environmentally sound than private septic systems.

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“I am pleased the council approved the \$1.5 million for the planning studies,” County Administrator Robert L. Stickels said. “This will be very beneficial, not just for the county, its residents and the protection of our groundwater supplies, but also in allowing us to try to get ahead of the inevitable growth that is coming our way.”

Sussex County already provides sewer service to more than 50,000 users in 15 districts throughout the county, with most of those in the growing eastern region. County officials said the move to begin planning for expansions and a new regional district is necessary now as those communities begin to see development interest.

Councilmen Dale R. Dukes and Vance C. Phillips applauded the decision, saying these were important steps in securing orderly growth. “We do proper planning and we’re trying to stay ahead of the curve,” Mr. Dukes said.

Mr. Phillips said the decision to conduct the sewer studies is emblematic of the commitment to good planning the County Council has made in the past.

In a related matter, County Council also awarded a nearly \$25,000 contract to Duffield Associates of Georgetown to provide technical consulting on the development of a wellhead protection ordinance, which is required by Delaware law. Such an ordinance would establish rules and standards for development on lands identified as recharge sites for groundwater.

Any ordinance would be developed in conjunction with a 10-member committee to be appointed by County Council. That draft then would be considered as part of the county’s next comprehensive land use update, due in 2007.

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